

## **MEASURABLE ANNUAL GOALS, BENCHMARKS, AND SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES**

### **What are measurable Annual goals?**

Annual goals set the general direction for instruction and assist in determining the specific courses, experiences, and skills a student will need. There is a direct relationship between the goal and the needs identified in the Present Level of Educational Performance (PLEP). Goals are also descriptions of what a student can reasonably be expected to accomplish within a 12-month period with the provision of special education services. Goals should be written to increase the student's successful participation in the general curriculum and meet the needs that result from the disability. *There are four critical characteristics of a well-written goal: it is meaningful, measurable, able to be monitored, and useful in making decisions.*

#### Components of a Goal

- Conditions
  - ✓ Time, situation, materials
- Behavior
  - ✓ Task described is observable
- Criterion
  - ✓ Measures the effectiveness of the goal
  - ✓ Sets the standard for monitoring
- Student
  - ✓ The learner

**Use a format:** Under what conditions, name of learner, will name of behavior to a specific criterion.

#### **Examples:**

- ◆ In 32 weeks, across all settings, Ian will identify 20 major warning words and symbols (e.g., Stop, Poison, Danger, Hazard, etc.) with 95% accuracy and will identify appropriate actions to take when these words are seen with 100% accuracy.
- ◆ In 30 weeks, when given a direct verbal direction by an adult, Joe will begin to comply with the direction within 10 seconds on 80% of opportunities for 3 consecutive data days.

## **Writing Benchmarks (Major Milestones) or Short-term Objectives (Intermediate Steps)**

Once the IEP team has developed measurable annual goals for a child the team must develop either measurable intermediate steps (short-term objectives) or major milestones (benchmarks) that will enable parents, students, and educators to monitor progress during the year, and, if appropriate, to revise the IEP consistent with the student's instructional needs. They are the links for accomplishing the goal. Benchmarks and short-term objectives provide a reference point for progress toward the annual goal and are the basis for developing a detailed instructional plan for the student.

**Benchmarks** may be written by stating the content to be learned, or the skills to be performed. They can be general measurable statements representing a milestone, and can be thought of as describing the amount of progress the child is expected to make within specified segments of the year. To determine whether a benchmark (major milestone) is appropriate or not, make sure it is measurable, represents expectations, is developmentally appropriate, and relates to progress on the goal.

**Short-term Objectives** are intermediate steps between a student's present level of educational performance and the annual goals established for the student. Their development is based on a logical breakdown of the major components of the annual goals and they measure progress toward meeting the goals.

### **Benchmarks (Major Milestones)**

- ◆ Measurable
- ◆ General statement represents milestones to goal
- ◆ Represent progress toward the goal

### **Short-term Objectives (Intermediate Steps)**

- ◆ Measurable
- ◆ Specific measurable component of the goal
- ◆ Represent progress toward the goal

## **Examples:**

### **1. PLEP→Goal→Short-term Objectives**

#### **PLEP:**

As of 9/30/99, when given a choice of topics, Shane writes a weekly journal entry in the regular classroom scoring 7 out of 50 points, as compared to his classmates who averaged 36 points, using the fourth-grade rubric which measures fluency, content and mechanics. Shane has difficulty with punctuation, sentence structure and composition of an idea.

#### **Goal:**

In 30 weeks, when given a choice of topics, Shane will write a weekly journal entry in the regular classroom setting scoring 40/50 points for a period of four consecutive weeks using the fourth-grade written language rubric.

#### **Objectives:**

- ◆ When given a choice of topics, Shane will write ten complete sentences in his journal entry in the regular classroom setting using three different sentence types four out of five entries.
- ◆ Shane will proofread a journal entry finding all punctuation, spelling, capitalization and sentence errors for eight out of ten entries.

### **2. PLEP→Annual Goal→Benchmarks**

#### **PLEP:**

John displays difficulties writing his thoughts on paper. He has creative ideas, but does not understand sentence construction or how to develop paragraphs. He needs to use punctuation and capitalization consistently. John received 12 out of 50 points on the district's assessment for expressive writing. He needs to write the four different sentence types (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex) correctly and integrate them into a paragraph.

#### **Annual Goal:**

In 36 weeks, John will write at least a six-sentence paragraph using at least three different sentence types scoring 45 out of 50 on the writing rubric.

#### **Benchmarks:**

- ◆ write simple sentences
- ◆ write compound sentences
- ◆ write complex sentences
- ◆ write compound-complex sentences

## How do we know we are doing it right?

- ✓ Goals are related to meeting the student's needs in order to meet the child's needs that result from the disability and enable him/her to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum.
- ✓ Goals are measurable, meaningful, able to be monitored, and useful in making decisions.
- ✓ Goals are statements related to needs identified in the PLEP.
- ✓ Goals are statements of anticipated results to be achieved in a year.
- ✓ Progress indicators (benchmarks [major milestones] or short-term objectives) are written for each goal.
- ✓ Goals and short-term objectives/benchmarks must be written so they can pass the "Stranger Test." In other words, they must be written so someone who did not write it could use it to develop appropriate instructional plans and assess student progress.
- ✓ Goals must also pass the "So What Test," meaning that the team considers how valid the goal, short-term objective, or benchmark is. In conducting the "So What Test" the IEP team must answer the following question, "Is the skill indicated in this goal, short-term objective/benchmark really an important skill for the student to learn?"

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